

DESCRIPTION OF A NEW BRACONID PARASITE OF ARTONA  
CATOXANTHA (HYMENOPTERA).

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The description of the following new parasite is presented at this time so its name will be available to economic workers who are studying the life history, habits and control of the coconut pest, *Artona catoxantha* Hampson. The material from which this new species is described was forwarded by B. A. R. Gater, of the Department of Agriculture of Straits Settlements and Federated Malay States, accompanied by a letter stating that it is an important parasite of the early instars of its host and that efforts are being made to introduce it into Fiji to control *Levuana iridescens*.

*Apanteles artonae*, new species.

Ovipositor short, hind legs except base of tibiae black, second tergite with oblique furrows, hind coxae opaque, granular.

*Female*.—Length 2 mm. Eyes very slightly converging towards the clypeus; face rather coarsely punctured, with a tendency to transverse striations, with rather distinct ridge below the bases of the antennae; vertex shining but with small punctures; antenna distinctly tapering apically, 18-jointed in type, the basal joints fully four times as long as their greatest width; mesoscutum with distinct, close, well-defined punctures; parapsides indicated posteriorly; suture in front of the scutellum broad, with four transverse rugae at the bottom; scutellum convex, with large punctures on the disk, the lateral face granular followed posteriorly by a somewhat polished area; propodeum with indistinct punctures medianly, with well-defined carina laterally, otherwise without carinae; mesepisternum shining, with distinct setigerous punctures; posterior coxae long, cylindrical, opaque, granular and with a few well-defined punctures interspersed; posterior tibiae longer than their femora and trochanters combined; first tergite slightly longer than its greatest apical width, indistinctly sculptured laterally, medianly smooth and shining; second tergite with two oblique furrows, the lateral area subopaque, the median area smooth and polished; following tergites polished; ovipositor short, about half as long as the first tergite; nervulus postfurcal by a distance somewhat greater than its length. Black; head and thorax covered with sparse white hair; sides of the first and second tergites ferruginous; anterior legs, below the bases of the femora, ferruginous but with the tarsi paler than the femora; base of posterior tibia ferruginous; palpi sordid white; wings hyaline, distinctly iridescent, venation pale brown, costa and stigma dark brown.

*Male*.—Length 1.75 mm. Antenna not so distinctly tapering as in female; intermediate femora distinctly infusate basally; first and second tergites very narrowly ferruginous laterally; otherwise agrees with above characterization of the female.

*Type locality*.—Kuala Lumpur, Federated Malay States.

*Type*.—Cat. No. 40097, U. S. N. M.

Described from six females (one type) and nine males (one allotype) received from B. A. R. Gater, and said to be a parasite of the early stages of *Artona catoxantha*. Specimens recorded under his number 2603.

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## NOMINA CONSERVANDA FROM THE STANDPOINT OF THE TAXONOMIST.

BY W. L. McATEE, *U. S. Biological Survey.*

Nomina conservanda have been adopted for the chief purpose of preserving familiar names. The action is equivalent to a ruling in the field of language that we shall continue to use the terms horseless carriage or flying machine and never change to such modern ones as automobile or airplane. Why do scientists, most of whom presumably are evolutionists, attempt to block development in taxonomy while constantly accepting change in other fields both within and without the domain of science?

Getting at the root of the thing, what virtue is there in familiarity? Certainly there is no real value in preserving a familiar name unless it embodies a definite concept. Proponents of nomina conservanda assume that these names do embody such concepts but this is a fallacy. In fact the longer a name has been in use the more we may be assured that authors have applied it to diverse organisms. The history of old names is very likely to be a chronicle of misidentifications.

Any one who has revised a taxonomic group knows this is true. He finds the same name label on different species, sometimes on several of them, and he finds different species (including undescribed ones) standing under a single name. If these things are true of collections, they are true also of literature which is based on collections. The plea that nomina conservanda preserve definite concepts, for the field of entomology at least, is ridiculous.

The definite concept idea is not retroactive; we can not consult the older writings and assume without great risk of error, when we find one of the conserved "familiar names" that it applies to the same organism assigned to it at present. Furthermore the definite concept idea has no anticipatory value, for we can not be insured against future change. Progress in taxonomy will not stop. Every successive reviser finds characters overlooked by his predecessors and refines the classification. Taxonomy is dynamic not static and its development demands never-ceasing perfecting of analysis and definition. Setting